

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

Held in Washington, D. C., May 19, 1952

The ninth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, during the fiscal year 1952, was held in its Office in the Interior Department Building on Monday, May 19, 1952. The following members were present:

Mr. Finley, Chairman,
Mr. Neild,
Prof. Belluschi,
Mr. Peets,
Mr. deWeldon,

also H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary

and Administrative Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The Minutes of the Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, held on April 30, 1952, were approved.

2. REVISED DESIGN FOR THE MARGARET MURRAY WASHINGTON VOCATIONAL SCHOOL: Mr. Merrel A. Coe, Municipal Architect, presented a revised design for the Margaret Murray Washington Vocational School.

The Commission noted that Mr. Coe had embodied criticisms made by Mr. Neild during a conference with Mr. Coe at the April meeting, and that he had materially improved the design.

Mr. Coe said the criticisms were very helpful to him, and resulted not only in improving the design of the building, but also in bringing the building out of the ground and adding six more class rooms. The plan showed an entrance in the main lobby and an auditorium in back of it. It comes within two steps of the ground level. Prof. Belluschi considered it a very much better plan than the old one. It was noted that Mr. Coe had straightened out the irregular parapet.

On motion moved and seconded, the Commission approved the design (Exhibit A)

Held in Washington, D. C., May 12, 1952

The ninth meeting of the Commission of the District of Columbia, during the fiscal year 1952, was held in the Office in the Interior Department Building on

Monday, May 12, 1952. The following members were present:

Mr. Lantry, Chairman,
Mr. Healy,
Prof. Belluschi,
Mr. Pease,
Mr. Gawelton,

also Mr. F. Casperson, Secretary

and Administrative Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: The Minutes of the meet-

ing of the Commission of the District of Columbia, held on April 30, 1952, were approved.

2. REVISIONS TO DESIGN FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL:

Mr. Lantry, Mr. Pease, Municipal Architect, presented a revised design for the

Washington Vocational School.

The Commission noted that Mr. Pease had submitted criticisms made by Mr.

Pease during a conference with Mr. Lantry at the April meeting, and that he had

materially improved the design.

Mr. Pease said the criticisms were very helpful to him, and resulted not

only in improving the design of the building, but also in bringing the building

ing out of the ground and adding six more class rooms. The plan showed an

entrance in the main lobby and an auditorium in back of it. It seems likely

two steps of the ground level. Prof. Belluschi considered it a very much

better plan than the old one. It was noted that Mr. Pease had emphasized out

the irregular part.

On motion moved and seconded, the Commission approved the design (Exhibit A)

3. PUBLIC LIBRARY, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: The Commission asked Mr. Coe if there were any further developments with regard to the Public Library project. He replied "no, but we are waiting for a report from the Commission of Fine Arts concerning the matter."

Chairman Finley said the project is before the Commission for study.

Thereupon, Mr. Coe left the Commission Room, and the Commission gave the project further consideration. A letter received from Mr. Albert W. Atwood, President of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library, was read (Exhibit B) and discussed.

Professor Belluschi felt that the letter set forth about the same arguments presented by the Librarian, Mr. Peterson, at the April meeting of the Commission, and that it seemed to indicate particularly that the Library authorities did not wish to develop a Central Library at the Sixth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue site.

The Commission reaffirmed the decision made at the April meeting that park land on Mount Vernon Square should not be used for a new library building on that square. The Commission expressed sympathy for the desires of the library authorities to have a building constructed in conformity with present day standards.

Thereupon the Commission decided to report to Mr. Coe and to Mr. Atwood, disapproving the erection of the proposed library building on Mount Vernon Square, and suggesting the consideration of other available sites for the building. The design submitted was disapproved. (Exhibit C and C-1)

Later in the day the Commission inspected the Central Library building at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue and also the one built 50 years ago on Mt. Vernon Square. The Commission also noted the vacant square at Sixth Street and Indiana Avenue, which is owned by the District Government and which is adjacent to the above mentioned Central Library Building.

3. PUBLIC LIBRARY, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: The Commission asked Mr. Doe

if there were any further developments with regard to the Public Library project. He replied "no, but we are waiting for a report from the Commission of this Arts concerning the matter."

Chairman Finley said the project is before the Commission for study. Thereupon, Mr. Doe left the Commission Room, and the Commission gave the project further consideration. A letter received from Mr. Albert W. Wood, President of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library, was read (Exhibit B) and discussed.

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The Commission reaffirmed the decision made at the April meeting that park land on Mount Vernon Square should not be used for a new library building on that square. The Commission expressed sympathy for the desires of the Library authorities to have a building constructed in conformity with present day standards.

Thereupon the Commission decided to report to Mr. Doe and to Mr. Wood, disapproving the erection of the proposed library building on Mount Vernon Square, and suggesting the consideration of other available sites for the building. The design submitted was disapproved. (Exhibit C and D-1)

Later in the day the Commission inspected the Central Library building at 444 Pennsylvania Avenue and also the one built 50 years ago on Mt. Vernon Square. The Commission also noted the vacant square at Sixth Street and Indiana Avenue, which is owned by the District Government and which is adjacent to the above mentioned Central Library building.

4. MARINE CORPS MEMORIAL: The Chairman read a letter which he received from the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation, as follows:

14 May, 1952

Dear Mr. Finley:

"The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation has instructed me to respectfully request The Commission of Fine Arts to give careful consideration and, through this, it is hoped, affirmative action to the following:

"Reserve the land near Lee Boulevard in Arlington County, known as the Nevius Tract, for the erection of the Marine Corps Memorial, which would be in accordance with Public Law 157, 80th Congress, Act of July 1, 1947 (61 Stat., 242) as amended. It is further respectfully requested that the remainder of the Tract be reserved as a public park and parade ground for the use of the Armed Services on Memorial days. Adjacent to Arlington Cemetery where the heroes of our country now rest, ~~and~~ the tract is of special significance for such a memorial.

"The Marine Corps Memorial is a heroic statue inspired by the flag raising on Mt. Surabachi, Iwo Jima. The sculptor is Mr. Felix deWeldon and the Architect, Mr. Edward F. Neild.

"A memorial to the heroic dead, it honors all Marines, past, present, and future. It is more even than this, for it honors the American youth from whom good Marines are made, and whose spirit, pervading all services, has won our country's battles. Based on a natural incident of great valor its warmth will belong to all who see it.

Respectfully,

R. L. Denig, Brig. Gen. USMC, Ret.
President of the Board.
by Ralph Wray
Executive Secretary

The Secretary stated that the suggestion to place the Marine Corps Memorial on the Nevius Tract was concurred in informally a few months ago when the Commission visited the site. The Columbia Island site that had been proposed by the Marine Corps was also seen at the time, but was not particularly favored and was thought to be a site that required further study.

The suggestion at the time was that the Nevius Tract be made a part of the Arlington National Cemetery, but there is a Bill pending in Congress now proposing to make it a part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Mr. deWeldon said the Bill has passed the House of Representatives which proposed to give the Marine Corps five years more to erect the Memorial, and which would allow taking land in Virginia for the Memorial.

4. MARINE CORPS MEMORIAL: The Chairman read a letter which he received from the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation, as follows:

May 19, 1942

Dear Mr. Finley:

"The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation has discussed the proposal to erect the Commission of Fine Arts to give careful consideration and, through this, it is hoped, affirmative action to the following:

"Reserve the land near Lee Boulevard in Arlington County, known as the Nevins tract, for the erection of the Marine Corps Memorial, which would be in accordance with Public Law 17, 80th Congress, Act of July 1, 1947 (61 Stat., 242) as amended. It is further respectfully requested that the remainder of the tract be reserved as a public park and parade ground for the use of the Armed Services on Memorial days. Adjacent to Arlington Cemetery where the heroes of our country now rest, this tract is of special significance for such a memorial.

"The Marine Corps Memorial is a heroic statue inspired by the flag raising on Iwo Jima. The sculptor is Mr. Felix deWeldon and the architect, Mr. Edward D. Wehle. "A memorial to the heroic deed, it honors all Marines, past, present, and future. It is more than this, for it honors the American youth from whom good Marines are made, and whose spirit, pervading all services, has won our country's battles. Based on a natural incident of great valor the marble will belong to all who see it.

Respectfully,

L. L. Connelley, Major General, USMC, Ret.
President of the Board.
by Ralph Wray
Executive Secretary

The Secretary stated that the suggestion to place the Marine Corps Memorial on the Nevins tract was considered in January a few months ago when the Commission visited the site. The Columbia Island site had been proposed by the Marine Corps was also seen at the time, but was not seriously favored and was thought to be a site that required further study. The suggestion at the time was that the Nevins tract be made a part of the Arlington National Cemetery, but there is a bill pending in Congress now proposing to make it a part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Mr. deWeldon said the bill has passed the House of Representatives which proposed to give the Marine Corps five years time to erect the memorial, and which would allow taking land in Virginia for the memorial.

Mr. Peets felt a list should be made of suggested sites for the Marine Corps Memorial, with the aid of a consultant who would advise as to the merits of each site. "It is entirely likely that he would recommend the Nevius tract; but I do feel that the matter should be analyzed systematically. Also, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission should be consulted in this matter."

Chairman Finley asked if this matter in regard to selecting the Nevius Tract has been taken up with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Secretary replied, "No." At a meeting held on January 10, 1952, Hon. W. E. Reynolds, Commissioner of Public Buildings, while in conference with the Commission of Fine Arts on several matters, reported that the question of sale of the Nevius Tract as Surplus Property is in his jurisdiction, and unless there is a very good reason for keeping it in Government Ownership under the law pertaining to Surplus Property it would have to be sold. The Commission of Fine Arts sent a strong protest, against the sale of the Nevius Tract to Mr. Reynolds by letter dated January 16th. On August 22, 1951, a letter was sent to the Chairman of the Committee on Public Works, House of Representatives, reporting on H. R. 1901, proposing the sale of the Nevius Tract, and the Commission of Fine Arts protested strongly against it (Exhibit D)."

After some further discussion the Commission decided to ask the National Capital Park and Planning Commission if there would be any objection on their part to placing the Marine Corps Memorial on the Nevius Tract (Exhibit E). General Denig was informed accordingly (Exhibit F).

Later in the day the Commission inspected the old "Pole Field Tract" west of the Tidal Basin, suggested by Mr. Peets as a possible site for the Marine Corps Memorial. It was decided to give the site consideration. It is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, which proposed to develop a Rose Garden there.

Mr. Foster felt that should be made of suggested sites for the Marine Corps Memorial, with the aid of a consultant who would advise as to the merits of each site. "It is entirely likely that he would recommend the Nevins tract; but I do feel that the matter should be analyzed systematically. Also, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission should be consulted in this matter."

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After some further discussion the Commission decided to ask the National Capital Park and Planning Commission if there would be any objection on their part to placing the Marine Corps Memorial on the Nevins Tract (Exhibit E). General Dent was informed accordingly (Exhibit F).

Later in the day the Commission inspected the old "Red Tract" west of the Tidal Basin, suggested by Mr. Foster as a possible site for the Marine Corps Memorial. It was decided to give the site consideration. It is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, which proposed to develop a Rose Garden there.

5. BRONZE PLAQUE FOR THE BLAIR HOUSE: The Secretary reported that on May 13th an urgent request was received from the Department of State for advice regarding the design of a Bronze Plaque to be placed on the Blair House, to be dedicated on May 21st by President Truman to commemorate Leslie Coffelt, who gave his life in the defense of the President of the United States on November 1, 1950. The Plaque was being presented by the National Sojourners, a Masonic Military Fraternity. It measures 15" x 20" and the location had been approved by the Public Buildings Administration.

The Commission took note of the fact that Mr. deWeldon had approved the design of the Plaque (Exhibit G). There was insufficient time to bring it to the attention of the Commission at this meeting.

6. PROGRESS REPORT ON GOVERNMENT AND ART: The Secretary presented a volume of Part II of the proposed Report on Government and Art--a mimeograph copy of 150 pages, comprising in narrative form the four volumes of Testimony on the subject that Col. Bonner had summarized.

The Commission decided to review the document, and decided also that a copy of the document should be sent to each of the representatives of Government establishments and private organizations that had testified to ascertain whether or not the summary pertaining to their establishment or organization is regarded by them to be satisfactory (Exhibit H).

7. H. R. 7799, SMITHSONIAN GALLERY OF ART: Chairman Finley presented a copy of the legislation (H. R. 7799) (Exhibit I), which Congressman Kearns introduced in the House of Representatives and concerning which he desired the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts.

The Commission felt that while there is need for an Opera House it would be impractical to include in the Smithsonian Gallery of Art also an opera house and theatre. Chairman Finley said that the Smithsonian

5. BUREAU FOR THE PLAIN HOUSE: The Secretary reported that

on May 19th an urgent request was received from the Department of State

for advice regarding the design of a private library to be placed on the

Plain House, to be dedicated on the 1st of President Grant to commemorate

late Leslie Colville, who gave his life for the defense of the President

of the United States on November 1, 1891. The design was being prepared

by the National College of Architects, a National Library Association. It measures

15' x 20' and the location had been approved by the Public Buildings

Administration.

The Commission took note of the fact that Mr. Colville had approved

the design of the Plaque (Exhibit G). There was insufficient time to bring

it to the attention of the Commission at this meeting.

6. PROGRESS REPORT OF GOVERNMENT AND STATE: The Secretary presented a

volume of Part II of the proposed Report on Government and State Affairs

graph copy of 150 pages, containing in narrative form the four volumes of

Testimony on the subject that Col. Turner had submitted.

The Commission decided to review the document, and decided also that

a copy of the document should be sent to each of the representatives of

Government establishments and private organizations that had been asked to

ascertain whether or not the country pertaining to their establishment or

organization is regarded by them to be satisfactory (Exhibit H).

7. H. R. 7792, ANTI-SUBVERSIVE ACT: Chairman Bailey presented

a copy of the legislation (H. R. 7792) (Exhibit I), which Congressman Keating

introduced in the House of Representatives and concerning which he desired

the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts.

The Commission felt that while there is need for an anti-subversive

law it would be impractical to include in the anti-subversive bill of the House

opera house and theater. Chairman Bailey said that the anti-subversive

Institution has great need for another building, but has as yet no funds for the erection of the proposed Gallery. A report was sent to Congressman Kearns (Exhibit J). It was thought an opera house should be limited to 5,000 but be separate from the Gallery.

8. THE L'ENFANT PLAN: Chairman Finley read a letter, as finally drafted by Mr. Peets, having for its purpose the protection of the L'Enfant Plan for the National Capital, which was considered at the April Meeting of the Commission and is to be sent to the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

The Commission expressed their appreciation of the letter and it was approved (Exhibit K).

9. NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: The Commission decided to hold their next meeting in Washington on Wednesday, July 2, 1952, Conflicting dates and the desire to await action by Congress on certain important pending legislation made it impractical to have a meeting of the Commission during the month of June.

10. RECEPTION AT THE WHITE HOUSE: The Commission of Fine Arts attended a delightful reception at the White House, at 5:00 p.m., where an opportunity was given to meet the President and Mrs. Truman and to inspect the newly renovated State Rooms. The Commission were pleased with the work done.

Institution has great need for another building, but has as yet no funds for the erection of the proposed Gallery. A report was sent to Congressman Kearns (Exhibit 1). It was thought an open house should be limited to \$5,000 but be separate from the Gallery.

8. THE L'AMANT PLAN: Chairman Tully read a letter, as finally drafted by Mr. Pease, having for its purpose the protection of the L'Amant plan for the National Capital, which was considered at the April meeting of the Commission and is to be sent to the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

The Commission expressed their appreciation of the letter and it was approved (Exhibit 2).

9. NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: The Commission decided to hold their next meeting in Washington on Wednesday, July 2, 1952. Conflicting dates and the desire to avoid action by Congress on certain important pending legislation made it impractical to have a meeting of the Commission during the month of June.

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C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

May 20, 1952

Dear Mr. Coe:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on May 19, 1952, considered the revised design for the Margaret Murray Washington Vocational School Building, which you submitted, and approved it.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.
David E. Finley,

Chairman.

Mr. Merrel A. Coe,
Municipal Architect,
District Building,
Washington D. C.

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Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

May 20, 1952

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David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Mr. Merril A. Coe,
Municipal Architect,
District Building,
Washington D. C.

BERT W. ATWOOD, PRESIDENT
MRS. PHILIP SIDNEY SMITH, VICE PRESIDENT
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WILLIAM MONTGOMERY

HARRY N. PETERSON, LIBRARIAN
TREASURER AND SECRETARY

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE
PUBLIC LIBRARY
OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON

14 May 1952

Commission of Fine Arts
Interior Department
Washington 25, D. C.

Gentlemen:

At a special meeting of the Board of Library Trustees on May 8th the Librarian reported on his visit, at Mr. Coe's invitation, to your Commission to discuss the proposal to extend the present Central Library building in Mount Vernon Square. The Trustees decided that it might be helpful to the members of the Commission of Fine Arts, while considering the proposition, to have a review of past actions taken in this connection. It is for that reason that I am writing you now.

The present Central Library building was opened in 1904 when Washington had a population of approximately 300,000 people. During the years that followed the population has almost trebled. As a consequence, the Central building was gradually outgrown, and it is now inadequate to meet the requirements of local students and readers. While the 14 branches that have been established, and the Bookmobile service, have made library facilities available in the areas where service was needed, each new agency naturally imposed additional burdens upon the Central Library organization for supervision, book selection, acquisition, preparation, binding, etc., not to mention various aspects of general administration.

The congestion at the Central Library building became evident about 25 years ago. From 1929 to date the Board of Library Trustees and the Librarians made efforts to relieve this condition. In 1931 the Processing Departments (Acquisitions, Catalog, Preparations, and Bindery) had to be removed from the Central building to other D. C. buildings in order to provide more space for public service.

Mr. Theodore W. Noyes, then President of the Board of Library Trustees, planned to extend the present Central Library by the addition of wings (for which, incidentally, according to statements in his file, he had tentative approval from the National Capital Park and Planning Commission); as an alternate he proposed the erection of an administration building on Mount Vernon Square, connected to the main library building. However, when in 1939 Square 491 was offered to the Board as a library site, it amounted to a matter of "take this or nothing."

EXHIBIT, 13

Subsequently funds were appropriated for construction of the first unit of a new building at 499 Pa. Ave. Work was started but was stopped when World War II began. Later the building was completed for office use by Federal Government war agencies.

In 1942 the Administrative Offices were removed from the Central building to another location in an effort to meet the growing public service requirements. From 1948 to date services were completely rearranged on the open-shelf, subject divisional plan, along the line of progressive library service in other cities, notably Cleveland, where the plan was initiated; additional bookcases were installed to obtain a more effective utilization of the available space. At the present time the east wing of the basement is being renovated in order to free 3,000 square feet for use by readers and to shelve 24,000 additional books. At this point it is felt that virtually every possible action to relieve the situation within the existing structure has been taken.

At the 1951 Hearings before the Senate Subcommittee on the D. C. Appropriation bill, Senator Hill reviewed the 499 Pa. Ave. project. After considering the estimated costs (\$460,000 to \$500,000 for renovation of first unit; \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000 for a second unit, the minimum requirement for public service; purchase of a new site for the Municipal Garage, plus \$2,000,000 to construct such a garage) Senator Hill advised the Board of Library Trustees to "think carefully in terms of perhaps an entirely new building somewhere else in another location."

Prior to Senator Hill's observations the Trustees had been considering various proposals. At a meeting following the Senator's recommendation, the Board reviewed a plan, submitted by the Librarian, to extend the present Central building forward and to the sides. In considering this plan the Board noted that it is in line with Mr. Noyes' thinking that an extension to the old building would be the most effective and economical solution to the problem. The members of the Board were impressed with the plan, particularly since it would cost much less to accomplish than 499. It would add approximately 140,000 square feet of space. Our current requirements for public service are about 100,000 square feet. In the interest of effective and economic administration we also need to bring together all of the scattered services now occupying about 40,000 square feet in various buildings throughout the city. This would leave almost 50,000 square feet available for future growth. Furthermore, it is assumed that footings would be made strong enough to add a fifth floor to the extension if needed later.

The proposal to extend the present Central building appealed to Senator Hill, Representative Bates, and the members of their Committees. They therefore included \$8,500 in the 1952 budget for a survey of the old building at Mount Vernon Square to ascertain the feasibility of such an extension. A preliminary report indicates that the proposal is a sound solution to the problem, provided it is approved by your body.

An extension to the present Central building would offer a number of advantages. The present location is just four blocks north of the ideal location according to library authorities, i.e., in "the heart of the downtown business center." (Attention is invited to the attached statement from THE AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING, by Wheeler and Githens.) The proposal would make it possible to utilize the 47,000 square feet of space in the present structure. The extension would cost less for the amount of space provided than another building in any other location; it would cost considerably less than the renovation and completion of the structure once planned for 499 Pa. Ave. The combination of the new and old buildings would provide a physical plant which could be operated with maximum efficiency and greatest convenience to the public.

The building, as tentatively planned, would incorporate all of the latest ideas with respect to library building that have developed in the past ten years. There have been great advances in that interval. The building is arranged to offer services in subject divisions, the plan originated by Librarian Brett in Cleveland and first developed in that city. However, it includes more recent developments such as sidewalk entrance, first used in the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, but now generally accepted as the appropriate approach to the Public Library in other cities, including the new library now under construction in Cincinnati.

As the members of the Commission know, the latest libraries are built on the modular basis, have relatively low ceilings (some 8' and 9', in contrast to the 10' ceilings proposed for the Central Library extension in Washington), and the fewest possible permanent partitions in order to have complete flexibility. All of these ideas are included in the tentative plans prepared by Mr. Coe, the Municipal Architect. Movable double-faced book cases would be used to separate one division from another and to shelve books in public reading rooms; movable walls are planned for office areas. The Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore and the new building under construction in Cincinnati illustrate many of these features.

As previously stated, the present Mount Vernon Square site comes fairly close to the heart of the downtown retail shopping center, recommended by library authorities to be the best location for a central library building. It is situated on the northern perimeter of the retail shopping zone, just four blocks north of the shopping center, and just east of the office zone. The downtown retail shopping area can only grow north toward Mount Vernon Square because of government installations or zoning for government buildings to the west, south, and east. The main library buildings in Cleveland, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Rochester, and Cincinnati, to name a few, are all situated either in or as close as possible to the downtown shopping center. Incidentally,

we have had a practical demonstration here in Washington of the value of good location in a shopping center. The Chevy Chase Branch was formerly situated at 3815 Livingston Street, around the corner from some neighborhood retail stores. After it was removed to its present location on Connecticut Avenue, in an active shopping center, the circulation went from 98,792 to 125,067 the first full year of operation in the new quarters. I think in this connection it is interesting to note that Dr. Wheeler, formerly librarian at Baltimore, conducted a survey in February, 1952, to check on the earlier conclusions regarding sites. He reported in March that the returns "proved the validity of the same old viewpoints which have been held for a long time by evidently 90% of librarians."

Since Dr. Wheeler has long been recognized as an outstanding authority on public library buildings and administration and is now, in retirement, serving as a consultant, you may be interested in his views regarding 499 Pa. Ave., as against the proposal to extend the present Central Library. Called upon as a consultant when the 499 building was being planned, he said that in his opinion the cost of operating a large, hollow-square building would be terrific; he added that he considered the building as planned so bad that he would not want to be a party to it. In contrast, when told of Senator Hill's proposal to abandon 499 and informed of the plan to extend the present building, he wrote on April 4, 1950, "I'm greatly relieved that it may be possible to abandon the 'do-nut' building with hole in the middle and enlarge the present one. I have been arguing with NYPL for 10 or 12 years re big addition out front, but it's a 'radical' thought. I used to tell Dr. Bowerman it would be better to enlarge than to go to that new location."

Mr. Carl Vitz, Librarian of the Cincinnati Public Library, commenting on 499 Pa. Ave. in a letter dated May 16, 1949, said that he felt that the plans were "completely out of line with his ideas of good library planning"; he branded the general idea of the building as "utterly hopeless." He said that about the only suggestion he had at the time was to "keep the interior as free as possible from structural divisions." As to location, Mr. Vitz said, "...somewhere near where Washington does its buying and where are gathered those businesses which serve Washington people and the community needs."

Mr. Angus MacDonald, President of Snead & Co. (maker of library stacks and other equipment), said in a letter dated April 6, 1950, "I like the idea of extending your present building and I think it could be done efficiently and economically."

These opinions are called to your attention because they have bearing on the extension proposal now under consideration.

Sincerely,

Albert W. Atwood
President

RE: PUBLIC LIBRARY SITE

(Quotations from Chapter VI, THE AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING, Wheeler and Githens, pp. 45-47)

"Library boards, appropriating bodies, read estate interests, city planning experts, and architects must realize that a public library building is first of all a public service plant and not a monument. The ideal site for a library building is where a large department store, a popular bank, or the busiest office building or drug store could be successfully located. It is vital to secure such a site.

Convenience to users is as important for a library as for a great office building. If, through a strategic location, a library can lend 100,000 books per year at a unit cost of twelve cents per circulation, while another library with equal zeal, every attention to method, and in a community of equal size and intelligence can do no better than 70,000 circulation at a unit cost of seventeen cents due to the handicap of a remote, inconvenient location and the consequent smaller patronage, the taxpayers of the second city are burdened by this increased unit overhead cost. But this is not so important as the fact that thousands of potential readers are not being reached with a commodity of great civic value...

"The shopping district is the magnet which draws the crowd, and a library to do the greatest good must be near the charmed circle." (F. P. Hill)

The whole viewpoint as to accessibility was well stated by Matthew S. Dudgeon in 1913: "How can any intelligent person maintain that library sites are well chosen and buildings well planned to attract the public? The site should be such as would be selected by a keen business man locating a book store. Would he locate it one or two or three blocks off the main street to get slightly surroundings? Would he put his building twenty or fifty or one hundred feet back from the sidewalk, rendering it necessary for the passer-by to make a considerable detour before even a casual inspection of his books would be possible? Would he put the main floor from four to ten feet above the sidewalk level, thus discouraging readers by a stair ascent? Would he place his windows high in the wall, far above the walk, so as to conceal the contents of the building?"

In large cities the site often advocated for the library is on some municipal square or at the "Civic Center", almost always removed from the shopping center, a risky and generally poor idea in spite of enthusiastic city planners who ignore the social problem of increasing book use in their desire to see an imposing and beautiful group of public buildings...

The late William H. Brett, Librarian at Cleveland and a leader of library thought at his time, during a newspaper controversy in another Midwest city in 1907, wrote a letter containing the following highly significant comments:

"Our experience in Cleveland leaves no doubt in my mind that a good location is absolutely necessary to the success of the library work. The main library is

situated on a side street out of the current of traffic, but not over five hundred feet from the busiest part of the city. It was formerly on the main street and was removed to this location six years ago, and there can be no question but that the change in location has been a great disadvantage...

"I believe that convenient and adequate rooms in a business block centrally located, if such could be had, would be unquestionable much better for the work than the best planned and equipped building possible in an inconvenient location. It would certainly be better to take such quarters at least as a temporary expedient until the right location can be secured than to make an investment in building and land in an inconvenient location which will permanently lessen the usefulness of the library.

"We must remember that the purpose of the public library is to bring books within easy reach. We are ministering not only to those who appreciate books and will make sacrifices to obtain them, but to a much larger number who are indifferent and must be attracted, and it is certainly no less important that the masses of our citizens should be intelligent readers than that the children should be taught to read. So important do I consider a central location that I think you would be justified in paying any possible price for it."...

"Nor should they take refuge in the too common arguments that going around the corner from a busy street to a side street, or accepting an inferior site already owned by the city will save money and provide automobilists with a parking space. Library services will be cut, the number of book-users reduced, proportionate operating costs raised, and the library's purpose of bringing good books into the lives and thought of all the people will be defeated."

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 20, 1952

Dear Mr. Coe:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at meetings held on April 30th and May 19th, have given careful consideration to the design which you presented for a Central Library to be erected on the square facing K Street between Seventh and Ninth Streets, Northwest. The Commission disapproved the design for the following reasons:

The Commission took note of the fact that the park area of the Square above mentioned is in Government ownership and is being maintained by the Government. In the center of this square is a monumental library building designed for the site fifty years ago and built with funds donated by the late Andrew Carnegie. The Commission are not in favor of erecting a building that would further eliminate the existing park by erecting a structure around the present building.

The Commission also took note of the fact that the square above mentioned is an integral feature of the L'Enfant Plan, providing an open space or plaza at the intersection of several radial avenues. The erection of the proposed building would entirely change the character of the square and deprive that section of the city of park area that is very much needed. It would also add to traffic congestion at this point.

The Commission recognizes that the proposed building should conform to present day library requirements in design and arrangement of space, etc. If the first section of the Central Library, which has been erected at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue, is not suitable for library purposes in relation to current requirements, the Commission would be glad to have you recommend other sites, now in Government ownership or that could be acquired, in an area that would be convenient for a Central Library building.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.
David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Mr. Merrel A. Coe,
Municipal Architect,
Washington D. C.

def/b

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 21, 1922

Dear Mr. Coe:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at meetings held on April 30th and May 19th, have given careful consideration to the design which you presented for a General Library to be erected on the square facing K Street between Seventh and Ninth Streets, North-west. The Commission disapproved the design for the following reasons:

The Commission took note of the fact that the park area of the square above mentioned is in Government ownership and is being maintained by the Government. In the center of this square is a monumental library building designed for the site fifty years ago and built with funds donated by the late Andrew Carnegie. The Commission are not in favor of erecting a building that would further eliminate the existing park by erecting a structure around the present building.

The Commission also took note of the fact that the square above mentioned is an integral feature of the L'Enfant Plan, providing an open space or plaza at the intersection of several radial avenues. The erection of the proposed building would entirely change the character of the square and deprive that section of the city of park area that is very much needed. It would also add to traffic congestion at this point.

The Commission recognizes that the proposed building should conform to present day library requirements in design and arrangement of space, etc. If the first section of the General Library, which has been erected at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue, is not suitable for library purposes in relation to current requirements, the Commission would be glad to have you recommend other sites, now in Government ownership or that could be acquired, in an area that would be convenient for a General Library building.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

sgd.
David M. Finley,
Chairman

Mr. Merril A. Coe,
Municipal Architect,
Washington D. C.

cc/c

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 21, 1952

Dear Mr. Atwood:

I wish to thank you for your letter of May 14th, which I read to the Commission of Fine Arts, at a meeting held on May 19th. The members were very glad to have the views of the trustees of the Public Library with reference to extending the present building on Mount Vernon Place.

The Commission recognizes that the proposed building for a Central Library should conform to present day library standards and requirements in design, arrangement of space, etc. They hope that a suitable site may be secured. If the first section of the Central Library, which has been erected at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue, is not suitable for library purposes in relation to current requirements, the Commission hopes that other sites will be recommended in an area that would be convenient for a Central Library.

The Commission are concerned, however, with the fact that the area at Mount Vernon Place, on which the present library is situated, is in Government ownership and is being maintained by the Government as a public park.

The Commission are not in favor of erecting a building that would further eliminate the existing park area by erecting a structure around the present building. The Commission also took note of the fact that the square above mentioned is an integral feature of the L'Enfant Plan, providing an open space or plaza at the intersection of several radial avenues. The erection of the proposed building would entirely change the character of the square and deprive that section of the city of park area that is very much needed. It would also, in the opinion of the Commission, add to traffic congestion at this point.

The Commission hope, therefore, that a site conveniently located may be secured for the Central Library building which would not involve the elimination of land now in use for park purposes.

For the Commission of Fine Arts,

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.
David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Mr. Albert W. Atwood, President,
The Board of Trustees, Public Library,
Washington D. C.

def/b
cc-Mr. Caemmerer

EXHIBIT C-1

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 21, 1932

Dear Mr. Atwood:

I wish to thank you for your letter of May 14th, which I read to the Commission of Fine Arts, at a meeting held on May 19th. The members were very glad to have the views of the trustees of the Public Library with reference to extending the present building on Mount Vernon Place.

The Commission recognizes that the proposed building for a Central Library should conform to present day library standards and requirements in design, arrangement of space, etc. They hope that a suitable site may be secured. In the first section of the Central Library, which has been erected at 439 Pennsylvania Avenue, is not suitable for library purposes in relation to current requirements, the Commission hopes that other sites will be recommended in an area that would be convenient for a Central Library.

The Commission are concerned, however, with the fact that the area at Mount Vernon Place, on which the present library is situated, is in Government ownership and is being maintained by the Government as a public park.

The Commission are not in favor of erecting a building that would further eliminate the existing park area by erecting a structure around the present building. The Commission also took note of the fact that the square above mentioned is an integral feature of the L'Enfant Plan, providing an open space or plaza at the intersection of several radial avenues. The erection of the proposed building would entirely change the character of the square and deprive that section of the city of park area that is very much needed. It would also, in the opinion of the Commission, add to traffic congestion at this point.

The Commission hope, therefore, that a site conveniently located may be secured for the Central Library building which would not involve the elimination of land now in use for park purposes.

For the Commission of Fine Arts,

Sincerely yours,

Edw.
David A. Miller,
Chairman.

Mr. Albert W. Atwood, President,
The Board of Trustees, Public Library,
Washington D. C.

del/p
cc- Mr. Commissioner

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

August 22, 1951

My dear Mr. Buckley:

The Commission of Fine Arts have given careful consideration to H. R. 1901, providing for the sale of the Nevius tract in Arlington County which is now owned by the United States Government.

The Commission hope that the Nevius tract will not be sold but will be held for the future extension of Arlington National Cemetery. They feel that this additional land will be needed in the future for the burial of those who have died in the country's service and for monuments erected in their honor. The Commission also feel that the sale of the Nevius tract to individuals, who might erect commercial buildings or housing developments in this area, would have a most unfortunate effect on the development of the City of Washington, especially of the Mall as a great monumental composition extending from the Capitol to Arlington Ridge in Virginia. The beautiful wooded hill, which comprises the Nevius tract, should be considered, in our opinion, an integral part of the Mall. The construction of large buildings on the Nevius tract would destroy the beauty and dignity of the wooded background of the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument; and, if any structures are to be built on this site in the future, they should be simple and low in scale in order not to detract from the large memorials on the Mall

The members of the Commission, therefore, hope the proposed sale of the Nevius tract will not be authorized and that this area will be retained for the future extension of the Arlington National Cemetery.

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable Charles A. Buckley,
Chairman
Committee on Public Works
House of Representatives,
Washington D. C.

THE COMMISSION OF THE LANDS
Washington, D. C.

August 22, 1921

My dear Mr. Buckley:

The Commission of Fine Arts have given careful consideration to H. R. 1901, providing for the sale of the Nevins tract in Arlington County which is now owned by the United States Government.

The Commission hope that the Nevins tract will not be sold but will be held for the future extension of Arlington National Cemetery. They feel that this additional land will be needed in the future for the burial of those who have died in the country's service and for monuments erected in their honor. The Commission also feel that the sale of the Nevins tract to individuals, who might erect commercial buildings or housing developments in this area, would have a most unfortunate effect on the development of the City of Washington, especially of the Mall as a great monumental composition extending from the Capitol to Arlington Ridge in Virginia. The beautiful wooded hill, which comprises the Nevins tract, should be considered, in our opinion, an integral part of the Mall. The construction of large buildings on the Nevins tract would destroy the beauty and dignity of the wooded background of the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument; and, if structures are to be built on this site in the future, they should be simple and low in scale in order not to detract from the large memorial on the Mall.

The members of the Commission, therefore, hope the proposed sale of the Nevins tract will not be authorized and that this area will be retained for the future extension of the Arlington National Cemetery.

Sincerely yours,

289.
David S. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable Charles A. Buckley,
Chairman
Committee on Public Works,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

January 16, 1952

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts, at the meeting of January 10th, were greatly interested in hearing from you that the disposition of the Nevius tract, comprising about twenty-five acres and adjoining the Arlington National cemetery, is under the jurisdiction of the Public Buildings Service of the General Services Administration.

The Commission have long been interested in the development of this property which, as you know, was bought by the United States Government for the purpose of erecting a hospital for the Veterans Administration on the site. When plans for the erection of such a building were under consideration the members expressed regret that the site was to be used for a large building, but were glad that the land would remain in the ownership of the Federal Government.

In view of the fact that the Nevius tract is on the axis of the Mall and can be seen from the Lincoln Memorial, it is of great importance as related to the central composition of the plan of Washington. The Commission of Fine Arts, at their last meeting, expressed the view that this tract should remain in the ownership of the Federal Government and should be made a part of Arlington National Cemetery. They also expressed the opinion that the tract would provide an ideal site for an important national memorial.

The Commission of Fine Arts, therefore, strongly protest the sale of the Nevius tract as surplus property and in support of this position have adopted the following resolutions:

1. It is essential for the overall plan of the National Capital that this property be retained in the possession of the United States Government. It is directly on the Mall axis and is in clear view of the Lincoln Memorial.
2. The Nevius Tract should be made a part of the Arlington National Cemetery. A part of the tract would be an ideal site for a great National Memorial from the terrace of which a most remarkable view of the National Capital could be obtained.

If we can be of further assistance to you in this matter I hope you will let us know.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,
Sgd.
David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable W. E. Reynolds
Commissioner of Public Buildings Service
General Services Building
Washington D. C.

def/f

THE COMMISSION OF THE ARTS
Washington D. C.

January 10, 1952

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

The members of the Commission of the Arts, at the meeting of January 10th, were greatly interested in hearing from you about the disposition of the Nevin tract, comprising about twenty-five acres and adjoining the Arlington National Cemetery, in order that the jurisdiction of the Public Buildings Service of the General Services Administration.

The Commission have long been interested in the development of this property which, as you know, was bought by the United States Government for the purpose of erecting a hospital for the Veterans Administration on the site. When plans for the erection of such a building were under consideration the members expressed regret that the site was to be used for a large building, but were glad that the land would remain in the ownership of the Federal Government.

In view of the fact that the Nevin tract is on the axis of the Mall and can be seen from the Lincoln Memorial, it is of great importance as related to the central composition of the plan of Washington. The Commission of the Arts, at their last meeting, expressed the view that this tract should remain in the ownership of the Federal Government and should be made a part of Arlington National Cemetery. They also expressed the opinion that the tract would provide an ideal site for an important national memorial.

The Commission of the Arts, therefore, strongly protest the sale of the Nevin tract as surplus property and in support of this position have adopted the following resolution:

1. It is essential for the overall plan of the National Capital that this property be retained in the possession of the United States Government. It is directly on the Mall axis and is in clear view of the Lincoln Memorial.
2. The Nevin Tract should be made a part of the Arlington National Cemetery. A part of the tract would be an ideal site for a great National Memorial from the terraces of which a most remarkable view of the National Capital could be obtained.

If we can be of further assistance to you in this matter I hope you will let us know.

For the Commission of the Arts:

Sincerely yours,
Lg'd.
David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable W. E. Reynolds
Commissioner of Public Buildings Service
General Services Building
Washington D. C.

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 26, 1952

Dear Sirs:

In accordance with Public Law 157-80th Congress, the Commission of Fine Arts is empowered to advise as to the location of a Marine Memorial. Under the act, approved July 1, 1947, this memorial was to be located on "public grounds in the District of Columbia." An amendment to the act is under consideration which would permit the erection of the memorial in, or in the immediate vicinity of, the District of Columbia, and an additional five years would be allowed for the erection of the memorial.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter from the Marine Memorial Foundation, asking that they be permitted to erect the memorial on the Nevius Tract in Arlington County, Virginia.

The Commission of Fine Arts would regard that location, among several that are being considered, as a suitable one for the Marine Memorial. However, before expressing our views to the Marine Memorial Foundation, this Commission would like to be advised whether or not the National Capital Park and Planning Commission would approve the erection of the Marine Memorial on the Nevius Tract which, the Commission understand, is in Government ownership, or whether your Commission would approve some other site.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

The National Capital Park
and Planning Commission,
Interior Department Building,
Washington D. C.

Enclosure

EXHIBIT E

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 26, 1952

Dear Sirs:

In accordance with Public Law 157-80th Congress, the Commission of Fine Arts is empowered to advise as to the location of a Marine Memorial. Under the act, approved July 1, 1947, this memorial was to be located on "public grounds in the District of Columbia." An amendment to the act is under consideration which would permit the erection of the memorial in, or in the immediate vicinity of, the District of Columbia, and an additional five years would be allowed for the erection of the memorial.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter from the Marine Memorial Foundation, asking that they be permitted to erect the memorial on the Nevins Tract in Arlington County, Virginia.

The Commission of Fine Arts would regard that location, among several that are being considered, as a suitable one for the Marine Memorial. However, before expressing our views to the Marine Memorial Foundation, this Commission would like to be advised whether or not the National Capital Park and Planning Commission would approve the erection of the Marine Memorial on the Nevins Tract which, the Commission understands, is in Government ownership, or whether your Commission would approve some other site.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David A. Finley,
Chairman

The National Capital Park
and Planning Commission,
Interior Department Building,
Washington D. C.

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 26, 1952

Dear General Denig:

At the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, which was held on May 19, I read your letter of May 14, 1952, recommending the Nevius Tract as a site for the proposed Marine Memorial. The Commission were very glad to have the views of your organization to which they will give most careful consideration.

As you know, Public Law 157-80th Congress provides that the memorial shall be erected on "public grounds in the District of Columbia." It is expected, however, that this law will be amended to permit the erection of the memorial in, or in the immediate vicinity of, the District of Columbia.

Pending the enactment of such legislation, the Commission feel that they should hold in abeyance any expression of views or recommendations as to a site for the proposed memorial.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.
David E. Finley,
Chairman.

General R. L. Denig, USMC, Ret.,
President of the Board,
Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation, Inc.,
U. S. Marine Corps Headquarters,
Washington 25, D. C.

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 26, 1952

Dear General Denig:

At the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, which was held on May 19, I read your letter of May 14, 1952, recommending the Nevins Tract as a site for the proposed Marine Memorial. The Commission were very glad to have the views of your organization to which they will give most careful consideration. As you know, Public Law 157-80th Congress provides that the memorial shall be erected on "public grounds in the District of Columbia." It is expected, however, that this law will be amended to permit the erection of the memorial in, or in the immediate vicinity of, the District of Columbia. Pending the enactment of such legislation, the Commission feel that they should hold in abeyance any expression of views or recommendations as to a site for the proposed memorial.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

3rd.
David S. Finley,
Chairman.

General R. L. Denig, USA, Ret.,
President of the Board,
Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation, Inc.,
U. S. Marine Corps Headquarters,
Washington 25, D. C.

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 13, 1952

Dear Dr. Turner:

In behalf of the Commission of Fine Arts, I approve the design which you presented for a bronze tablet to be placed on the Blair House, in memory of Leslie Coffelt.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours

Sgd.

Felix W. deWeldon,
Sculptor Member of the Commission.

Dr. Arden S. Turner,
National Sojourners,
20th and Chestnut Streets,
Philadelphia, Pa.

COPY

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 13, 1934

Dear Dr. Turner:

In behalf of the Commission of Fine Arts, I approve the design which you presented for a bronze tablet to be placed on the Blair House, in memory of Leslie Colville.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours

Sgd.
Felix W. Weyland,
Secretary of the Commission.

Dr. Arden S. Turner,
National Geographic
Society and Research
Philadelphia, Pa.

*

(INSIGNIA)

FOR VALOR

IN HONOR OF

LESLIE COFFELT

WHITE HOUSE GUARD

WHO GAVE HIS LIFE IN DEFENSE OF

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

HERE AT BLAIR HOUSE NOVEMBER 1, 1950

AN ACT OF OFFICIAL GALLANTRY

AND FRATERNAL CHIVALRY

Presented by the National Sojourners
In Commemoration of his Devotion to Duty
Dedicated May 21, 1952, By
President Harry S. Truman
A Member of National Sojourners
A Masonic Military Fraternity

(Bronze plaque, 15" x 20", erected on the Blair House
by the U. S. Bronze Sign Company, at location chosen
by the Public Buildings Administration, General Services)

*

(INSCRIPTION)

FOR VAULT

IN HONOR OF

LESLIE COVILL

WHITE HOUSE GUARD

WHO GAVE HIS LIFE IN DEFENSE OF

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

HERE AT BLAIR HOUSE NOVEMBER 1, 1950

AN ACT OF OFFICIAL GALLANTRY

AND FRATERNAL CHIVALRY

Presented by the National Sojourners
In Commemoration of his Devotion to Duty
Dedicated May 21, 1952, By
President Harry S. Truman
A Member of National Sojourners
A Masonic Military Fraternity

(Bronze Plaque, 17" x 20", erected on the Blair House
by the U. S. Bronze Sign Company, at location chosen
by the Public Buildings Administration, General Services)

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 26, 1952

My dear Mrs. Ross:

I am sending you a copy of a document which contains, in narrative form, the testimony of representatives of the Government and others that met with the Commission of Fine Arts during the past year to consider the subject of Government and Art.

The Commission would like to be assured that the statement pertaining to the Office of the Director of the Mint, which appears on pages 17 to 26 inclusive, is summarized in a form that is satisfactory to you. If not, would you be kind enough to indicate such changes as may seem to you to be desirable?

We are sending the enclosed document to you in confidence and would appreciate it if no publicity be given to the report until after it is released by the President, when the Commission has made its recommendations to him.

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable Nellie Tayloe Ross,
Director of the Mint,
Department of the Treasury,
Washington D. C.

Enclosure

EXHIBIT H

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 26, 1952

My dear Mrs. Ross:

I am sending you a copy of a document which contains, in narrative form, the testimony of representatives of the Government and others that met with the Commission of Fine Arts during the past year to consider the subject of Government and Art. The Commission would like to be assured that the statement pertaining to the Office of the Director of the Mint, which appears on pages 17 to 26 inclusive, is summarized in a form that is satisfactory to you. If not, would you be kind enough to indicate such changes as may seem to you to be desirable? We are sending the enclosed document to you in confidence and would appreciate it if no publicity be given to the report until after it is released by the President, when the Commission has made its recommendations to him.

Sincerely yours,

David S. Finley,
Chairman

Honorable Nellie Taylor Ross,
Director of the Mint,
Department of the Treasury,
Washington D. C.

Enclosure

82^D CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 7799

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 12, 1952

Mr. KEARNS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Public Works

A BILL

To authorize the appropriation of funds for the establishment of the Smithsonian Gallery of Art as a part of a National War Memorial in the District of Columbia.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That in order to assist in establishing the Smithsonian Gallery
4 of Art as a part of a National War Memorial (including
5 a theater and opera house) in the District of Columbia,
6 section 3 of the joint resolution entitled "Joint resolution to
7 set apart public ground for the Smithsonian Gallery of Art,
8 and for other purposes", approved May 17, 1938, is amended
9 by adding at the end thereof the following new subsection:
10 "(d) There are hereby authorized to be appropriated

- 1 such sums as may be necessary, in addition to the funds
2 received under subsection (a) of this section, to carry out
3 the purposes of this Act.”

82ND CONGRESS
2ND Session

H. R. 7799

A BILL

To authorize the appropriation of funds for the establishment of the Smithsonian Gallery of Art as a part of a National War Memorial in the District of Columbia.

By Mr. KEARNS

MAY 12, 1952

Referred to the Committee on Public Works

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN CARROLL D. KEARNS
May 12, 1952

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILL TO ESTABLISH THE SMITHSONIAN GALLERY OF ART AS PART OF
A NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL TO INCLUDE A THEATER AND OPERA
HOUSE INTRODUCED BY CONGRESSMAN KEARNS

I have introduced today, Monday, May 12, 1952, a bill to establish the Smithsonian Gallery of Art as part of a National War Memorial which will include a theater and opera house. This is a companion measure to my other legislative proposals, HR 5548 and HR 6166, to establish a theater and opera house and to transfer the unexpended funds of the National Capital Sesquicentennial Commission to the Commission of Fine Arts for this purpose.

My bill to establish the Smithsonian Gallery of Art is an amendment to the fine bill adopted by the 75th Congress in 1938. The original Act of Congress was adopted after lengthy hearings by the Congress. A national competition was held and an award of close to \$40,000 was won by Mr. Eli Saarinen of Detroit for his design. The Act provides in part that:

"It shall be the policy of the Regents (of the Smithsonian Institution) to maintain a worthy standard for the acceptance of art objects for exhibition in the Gallery, and to foster by public exhibitions from time to time in Washington, and other parts of the United States a growing appreciation of art, both of past and contemporary time..." Further, the Act provides that "In order to encourage the development of contemporary art and to effect the widest distribution and cultivation in matters of such art, the Regents are hereby authorized to solicit and receive funds from private sources, to acquire (by purchase or otherwise) and sell contemporary works of art or copies thereof, to employ artists and other personnel, award scholarships, conduct exhibitions, and generally to do such things and have such other powers as will effectuate the purposes of this subsection..."

In addition the 1938 Act provided "that for the purpose of providing a site for a suitable building for properly housing and displaying the national collections of fine arts, comprising paintings, sculptures, bronzes, glass, porcelain, tapestry, furniture, jewelry, and other types of art; to display portraits of eminent American men and women; and to exhibit the works of artists deserving of recognition..." there shall be established the Smithsonian Gallery of Art.

If my amendment is adopted the strong desire of the people of the District of Columbia to have the temporary buildings which clutter up the Mall removed will receive great impetus.

This splendid Act, Public Resolution No. 95 of the 75th Congress, has gathered dust quietly since its adoption by the Congress despite its

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILL TO ESTABLISH THE SMITHSONIAN GALLERY OF ART AS PART OF

A NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL TO INCLUDE A THEATER AND OPERA

HOUSE INTRODUCED BY CONGRESSMAN KEARNS

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My bill to establish the Smithsonian Gallery of Art is an amendment to the fine bill adopted by the 75th Congress in 1938. The original Act of Congress was adopted after lengthy hearings by the Congress. A national competition was held and an award of close to \$40,000 was won by Mr. Eli Saarinen of Detroit for his design. The Act provides in part that:

"It shall be the policy of the Regents (of the Smithsonian Institution) to maintain a worthy standard for the acceptance of art objects for exhibition in the Gallery, and to foster by public exhibitions from time to time in Washington, and other parts of the United States a growing appreciation of art, both of past and contemporary times... Further, the Act provides that "in order to encourage the development of contemporary art and to effect the widest distribution and cultivation in matters of such art, the Regents are hereby authorized to solicit and receive funds from private sources, to acquire (by purchase or otherwise) and self contemporary works of art or copies thereof, to employ artists and other personnel, award scholarships, conduct exhibitions, and generally to do such things and have such other powers as will effectuate the purposes of this subsection..."

In addition the 1938 Act provided "that for the purpose of providing a site for a suitable building for properly housing and displaying the national collections of fine arts, comprising paintings, sculptures, bronzes, glass, porcelain, tapestry, furniture, jewelry, and other types of art; to display portraits of eminent American men and women; and to exhibit the works of artists deserving of recognition..." there shall be established the Smithsonian Gallery of Art.

If my amendment is adopted the strong desire of the people of the District of Columbia to have the temporary buildings which cluster up the Mall removed will receive great impetus.

This splendid Act, Public Resolution No. 92 of the 75th Congress, has gathered dust dutifully since its adoption by the Congress despite its

being a part of the basic law of the land and despite the very great need for it.

My amendment will make the establishment of this gallery of living American art possible in the very near future. It will undoubtedly be supported by all segments of America's creative artists and art organizations as part, and a most worthy part, of a great living National War Memorial which shall include a living theater and opera house.

The text of my bill, HR 7799, follows:

"To authorize the appropriation of funds for the establishment of the Smithsonian Gallery of Art as a part of a National War Memorial in the District of Columbia.

"That in order to assist in establishing the Smithsonian Gallery of Art as a part of a National War Memorial (including a theater and opera house) in the District of Columbia, section 3 of the joint resolution entitled "Joint Resolution to set apart public ground for the Smithsonian Gallery of Art, and for other purposes", approved May 17, 1938, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new subsection:

"(d) There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary, in addition to the funds received under subsection (a) of this section, to carry out the purposes of this Act."

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"(d) There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary, in addition to the funds received under subsection (a) of this section, to carry out the purposes of this Act."

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington D. C.

May 21, 1952

My dear Mr. Kearns:

At a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, which was held on May 19th, I showed the members the copy of H. R. 7799, and also your statement of May 12th with reference to the establishment of the Smithsonian Gallery of Art as a part of a National War Memorial in the District of Columbia.

The Commission feel they are not in a position to comment on the bill at the present time but would be glad to take it under advisement and to give the bill further study.

For the Commission of Fine Arts,

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.
David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable Carroll D. Kearns
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

def/b

cc-Mr. Caemmerer

EXHIBIT J

THE COMMISSION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Washington, D. C.

May 21, 1932

My dear Mr. Keenan:

At a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, which was held on May 17th, I showed two reports and a copy of H. R. 7792, and also your statement of May 1931 with reference to the establishment of the Smithsonian Gallery of Art as a part of a National War Memorial in the District of Columbia.

The Commission feels that they are not in a position to comment on the bill at the present time but would be glad to take it under advisement and to give the bill further study.

For the Commission of Fine Arts,

Sincerely yours,

Sgt.
David E. Miller,
Chairman.

Honorable Carroll D. Keenan
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

del/0

cc-10. Keenan

C O P Y

The Commission of Fine Arts
Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

May 16, 1952

My dear Mr. Remon:

At a recent meeting the members of the Commission of Fine Arts discussed the possible effect of street closings on the aesthetic value of the L'Enfant Plan for the City of Washington. The matter came up during an informal consideration of the plans of the redevelopment of the Southwest section of the City. A member recalled that in February the newspapers published some tentative redevelopment plans. One of them proposed closing Delaware Avenue south of Virginia Avenue and allowing buildings to be erected on this area. The plan was submitted only as a study of the situation but was made for a public agency and was released for publication without disavowal of the proposal for closing Delaware Avenue.

We know, of course, that both the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the District officials give careful attention to all proposals for the closing of streets. It is our impression, however, that each proposal is considered individually and that, in practice, streets are usually closed in order to facilitate some construction project, public or private.

We are concerned lest the closing in this way, of streets and avenues for the convenience of local projects may, in its long range cumulative effect, seriously mar the L'Enfant Plan.

Unlike most cities, Washington is not the product of accident nor do we see here a monotonously repeated pattern. The L'Enfant Plan is coherent and unified. In such a plan the elimination or mutilation of streets may have more than local effect; they may undermine the logic of the entire plan.

It is true, of course, that the structural lines of the plan vary in importance; several of the shorter diagonals have been already obliterated without serious damage to the plan as a whole. But other, and particularly the lines that radiate symmetrically from important buildings and the avenues that open up long vistas, are vitally essential to the design and must not be lost.

We wish to emphasize the extreme importance of the aesthetic element in the plan of Washington. The striking character of the plan has been recognized and admired ever since it was made. That Washington is unlike all other cities in plan is a great psychological and practical advantage. When changes are made in the plan, we should try to make them in a way that will strengthen the character of the city, not in a way that will reduce the distinctiveness of its over-all plan.

The Commission is not advocating that no further street closing be permitted within the area of the L'Enfant Plan. It is generally agreed, for example, that in redevelopment operations it is desirable to create superblocks

The Commission of the
Interior Department Building
Washington, D. C.

May 10, 1933

Dear Mr. Honan:

At a recent meeting the members of the Commission of the Interior discussed the possible effect of street closures on the aesthetic value of the L'Enfant Plan for the City of Washington. The matter came up during an informal consideration of the plans of the redevelopment of the section west section of the City. A member recalled that in February the newspapers published some tentative redevelopment plans. One of them proposed closing Delaware Avenue south of Virginia Avenue and allowing buildings to be erected on this area. The plan was submitted only as a study of the situation but was made for a public agency and was released for publication without disavowal of the proposal for closing Delaware Avenue.

We know, of course, that both the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the District officials give careful attention to all proposals for the closing of streets. It is our impression, however, that each proposal is considered individually and that, in practice, streets are usually closed in order to facilitate some construction project, public or private.

We are concerned least the closing in this way, of streets and avenues for the convenience of local projects may, in the long range cumulative effect, seriously harm the L'Enfant Plan.

Unlike most cities, Washington is not the product of accident but of we see here a monotonously repeated pattern. The L'Enfant Plan is coherent and unified. In such a plan the elimination or mutilation of streets may have more than local effect; they may undermine the logic of the entire plan.

It is true, of course, that the street lines of the plan vary in importance; several of the shorter diagonals have been already obliterated without serious damage to the plan as a whole. But other, and particularly the lines that radiate symmetrically from important buildings and the avenues that open up long vistas, are vitally essential to the design and must not be lost.

We wish to emphasize the extreme importance of the aesthetic element in the plan of Washington. The striking character of the plan has been recognized and admired ever since it was made. That Washington is unlike all other cities in plan is a great psychological and practical advantage. When changes are made in the plan, we should try to make them in a way that will strengthen the character of the city, not in a way that will reduce the distinctiveness of the over-all plan.

The Commission is not advocating that no further street changes be permitted within the area of the L'Enfant Plan. It is generally agreed, for example, that in redevelopment operations it is desirable to create a grid-like

by closing sections of minor streets. We suggest, however, that in most cases the sections closed to traffic be kept as park areas and not used as sites for building. An avenue not needed for traffic might be turned into a grass mall. Street closings may also be advantageous where streets cross diagonal avenues at sharp angles. Vacating a block of the street, and using the land for building purposes may remove a traffic hazard and improve the appearance of the avenue.

I am confident that the District government and the Planning Commission will support the general point of view I have expressed and that you agree as to the importance of preserving the essential features of the L'Enfant Plan. Such questions as arise will probably relate to the means by which the above policy can be put into practice. One approach would be to insure the participation, in the public hearings on street closings, of groups representing the city as a whole. These might include the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings, the American Institute of Architects, the Thornton Society, the District of Columbia Historical Society and similar organizations. Another useful measure, perhaps a necessary one, would be the preparation of a plan showing the essential aesthetic elements of Washington, the streets, plazas, parks, and structures that should be considered inviolate to any but the most necessary and generally approved changes.

I do not need to assure you that the Commission of Fine Arts will be glad to be of service, in this connection, in any way that is within its power.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable John A. Remon
Chairman
National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

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I do not need to assure you that the Commission of Fine Arts will be glad to be of service, in this connection, in any way that is within its power.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David D. Hughes,
Chairman.

Honorable John A. Ford,
Chairman
National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

